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Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay interviewed by Toby Baylon

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Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay interviewed by Toby Baylon

Speakers: Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay and Toby Baylon

Date: May 20, 2021

Scope and Contents: In this interview, originally recorded via Zoom, Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay speaks with Watsonville is in the Heart team member Toby Baylon. Lydia speaks about her father, Benny Tumbaga's experience migrating to the United States from San Fernando, La Union, Philippines in 1926. She describes Benny's and his relatives' work in restaurants in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco as well as Benny's experiences as a musician. Lydia also discusses her own experiences growing up and going to school in Watsonville followed by her decision to move to Hawai'i later in life. Throughout the interview, Lydia shares her perspective on the shifting racial dynamics and demographics in Watsonville during the early twentieth century, the 1960s and 1970s, and the 1990s and early 2000s. She also discusses her "colorblind" approach to race which she states was instilled in her through her father and her multicultural upbringing in Watsonville. Lydia's analysis of contemporary migrant communities in Watsonville is informed by her perspective of the racial reckoning during the summer 2020.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 00:00

Okay.

Toby Baylon 00:02

Okay, so to start off, can you tell us your full name?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 00:07

My full name is Lydia Phillis Brumblay, last name uh uh Tumbaga. I go with Tumbaga still.

Toby Baylon 00:18

And where were you born, Lydia?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 00:20

I was born and raised in Watsonville, California. Born in 1951, which tells you my age today. I am 70 years old. Yeah.

Toby Baylon 00:33

Got it. Got it. Can you tell me a little bit about your family structure in Watsonville?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 00:40

Um, at the moment or from the beginning?

Toby Baylon 00:43

Uh, from the beginning.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 00:46

Okay. Well, you know, my father was Benny [unknown] Tumbaga and dad was born on October 17 1910, and he passed in 1991. He was from San Fernando, La Union and my father was—arrived in America, in 1926. He was 16 years old. At the time he came to America, he landed in Portland, Oregon. He was not supposed to come. It was his brother that was supposed to come who was age 18, and that was Andrew Tumbaga, but he was very ill. So, they used the ticket for my dad, and that's where my father ended up in Portland, California—I mean Portland, Oregon. He was there for a few months, before my uncle and a few of his cousin's united with him in Portland. There they began to get jobs. They mainly had jobs in restaurants, and bus boys, and whatever they could do to make money, and sent home to their family. Okay, and after after they were in Portland, Oregon, they had moved to Seattle did the same thing, in restaurants. These are all young teenage boys anywhere from the ages of 16 to 21. They were hard workers never never got in trouble as far as with police or in jail, you know, or any type of problems. They, they were young teenage boys having fun, but not malicious. So, they went to Seattle and worked there for a while and they all followed each other and ended up in between Oakland and San Francisco. San Francisco was their final before—uh they worked in really prestigious hotels there in San Francisco that today are still standing. They became— they worked their way up to chefs and shu chef—sous chefs, you know, the chef under the main chef.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 03:22

Anyway, um, they they did really well for themselves, and then what was happening right around that time—they they were teenage boys having fun, and at this point, I didn't hear from my family members, any type of problem they were having as far as racism at that, at that point, okay. And they, they— they went to San Francisco and they worked in the restaurants there and sending home to— money home to their families. They, like I said, lived, lived and worked elite hotels because they lived in the hotels and carried home many— later in life, when I grew up—many great recipes my dad had and baking recipes. He was a great cook. Of course, not only Filipino food but the American food that he had learned along the way. In between, they would go to Alaska. They had the fisheries where they made good money there too and that was seasonal and they would send the money home then, from what I understand. Then from there, my dad played music in bands. He was self taught and he happened to be in San Jose, California, visiting a cousin, when that's how he met my mother. Okay, in San Jose—my mother is Hispanic descent. So, I'm Filipino and Mexican.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 05:16

He uh he met my mom and they— after a while they were married and I'm the youngest of five children. I was born in 1951. I have a sister Elva, who was my mom's daughter, before she married my dad from a previous marriage, and my dad raised her from the age of one. So, she's considered our bloodline. You know, he treated her no different than us, the rest of his children. Then came my brother, Ben Jr., Frankie, Charles, and then me. Growing up in the Watsonville—uh Watsonville, this was wonderful. It was memories of a lot of fun growing up in Watsonville.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 06:08

My parents never spoke of the racism there that happened, when he did come to Watsonville. My mother, later in life as I was a teenager, told me what my dad went through. You know, the racism of being beat up, the Filipinos around the area—my father, no— you know, was blessed not to have had

that happened to him, but his friends and his cousins, you know, had altercations with the Caucasians. And they were called monkeys, they were called names. And this all came from my mom, later in life, as I learned when I was about 13 years old because my dad never spoke about it at all. He raised his kids to be non-racist. Never brought that to the table to talk about it, of what he went through. The only thing he did was make a good life for himself and taught his kids, you know, how to respect any a—race, creed, or color. Um, let's see, I think what I put together, and what my mother told me, was I think the Caucasian men were jealous of the Filipinos because at that point in life, they—there weren't many Filipino women. So, they had to date. If they dated, or they danced it was a—it was a Caucasian woman, and one thing about Filipinos they may have worked hard in the fields, and they may have worked hard wherever they were working, but come evening, they cleaned up and they look like a million bucks. They wore their suits, their ties, their—I see pictures of my father, I've shared in the museum there in Watsonville. Their shoes were polished, and they looked very slicked and I think that attracted the Caucasian women, not to mention they were gentlemen at the dances, and so so I think that caused a lot of conflict at that point in time. And I think that's that's what I get out of it.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 08:37

Um, let me see my notes here. Uh, Yeah. Yeah, so my mom had met my sister— uh my father in in San Jose, and right around that time they—when they married, he, of course, had the one year old daughter, and then they had my son—uh my brother, Ben, was born. And right around that time—the uh, right around that time my brother was born, and soon after that, when my brother was about maybe six months old, the war broke out, World War Two. Okay, and that is when my father took his family to Watsonville because he had two children, and was not able to join the forces, the military. So, they were told, my dad told me this before he died, they were told that if they could not join the military, they would have to do farming to help with the produce for the military and sending it out, you know, to the military. So, that's how he ended up in Watsonville, and of course, that's was really hard on him at first because of the racist happenings that was going on there that I just explained. My dad and uncle both, you know, went to Watsonville bought land and began farming strawberries out on the Guinness Road there in the Hall District area. By this time, came my other two brothers. I mean, I was born in 1951. So, I was around in the 50s and 60s, and by that time I came along life was easier for my father. He had already gone through the racial problems that they had, and you know, went beyond it. He he just went— he he didn't—nothing held him back is what it, what I'm trying to say. So, he ended up buying land bought a spot—my mom a little home, there in Elkhorn Road, and they began to have a big land of berries and delivered to Driscoll. They so—they sold their berries to Driscoll. So, my dad knew all of Driscoll company. I remember going along with him and delivering as a little girl. And my dad had at least 15 ranch hands at that point that lived on the ranch, and my uncle managed. And what I do remember, great memories was having lunch with all of them. You know, they didn't have sandwiches or brought their lunch. It was cooked for them, and we had shrimp, and fish, and of course, our rice, the whole works. I remember just sitting there as a little girl and everybody peeling my shrimp for me while we ate lunch together. They had a cook prepare the meal, and yeah, as I can say there was absolutely—I didn't know anything about how the Filipinos were treated until later in life. I—they protected us, they kept us from that, from anything like that. I was—I went to Hall school from from kindergarten to eighth grade. We had Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Caucasians, and we were—we didn't see color back then in Watsonville, in my time, in the 60s and 70s. So, one thing I can hand hand my father is I'm glad that he did not dwell on that, bring it into our lives, and pound that into our heads, there's racism in this

country because it's it's there, I'm not saying it's not there, but it's how you handle it and how you move forward and beyond.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 13:23

My father passed away in 1991. He had many friends that were Filipino, Japanese, Caucasian come to his funeral, and it was very touching because even the mayor was there. The mayor spoke, which we had no clue at that time, that he would fish with the mayor. He took the—we had a boat, he would take the mayor out fishing, and he loves gambling. Him and my uncle would go to Reno and gamble and we—I lived, from the 60s 70s on, I lived the best life you could in Watsonville, California, you know, due to my father and my mother—[inaudible] see if possible for us kids. And—

Toby Baylon 14:24

Hello, I think you've cut out for a second.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 14:28

Oh, where did you hear?

Toby Baylon 14:30

Um, the last thing I heard was like, in thanks to your father for having this great time in the Watsonville from like the 60s and 70s on.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 14:42

Yes, um I cannot look back and feel that I ever had to deal with anything that my father went through. Through my grammar school age, in high school, I graduated from Watsonville high. I moved to Hawai'i, jeez, later in life, much later in life. Must have been in my 30s, but as for living in Watsonville and what my father went through, you know, he he rose above that, and did his—as well as he could for his family. And I'm not to say that he wasn't mistreated when he came in to America, which, like I said, I never heard it firsthand from him. It was from my uncles and it was from my mother that she finally told me what my father went through. So, I'm thankful that he didn't dwell on it, and put his kids through not liking a certain race because they did something to him. His his best friends were were like were Caucasian, like I said, even though that's who they had problems with at the beginning, and I think in their, what their 20s 30s around in there. So, I think that's it about my dad in a nutshell. He he had his own band he played—he's well known in the Watsonville area. He played saxophone, piano, uh—my uncle played guitar. My dad also played the trumpet. He played for weddings and christenings, and yeah. He fished and he lived life to the fullest. He made a good life for himself. He went back to the Philippines after 50 years. The only thing I do remember my dad telling me is when he got on that boat, and he left the Philippines, he was 16 years old. And he explained to me how it felt to see his country go and not know where he was going and he didn't return for 50 years. He was 66 years old before he went back to the Philippines, and then after that, he would go once a year and see his family and stuff—but he did send a lot of his money to his family, even when he married I do remember him saying he had to go mail off a money order to his family. As as being a married man with a family, he still provided for them.

Toby Baylon 17:23

Yeah, it sounds like he's—yeah, I really like the idea of him not dwelling too much on the bad parts of kind of immigrating and the obvious racism that was going on, but yeah, like you said, it's like he wanted to stand above it and it sounds like he tried to instill that kind of mindset in his children.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 17:51

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. So um, I have no complaints. I mean, it saddens me what's happening in the world today because I was raised with every race, creed, or color. Then I moved to Hawai'i, I've been here 35 years and this is the melting pot of, you know, the US. We have every race, creed, and color here. Chinese, Japanese, Tongan Samoan, you know, Caucasian, Filipinos, and to me, I guess I was very sheltered and I didn't know how bad it really existed. But what I come to grips with is I feel racism, is it within the person that wants it to be there to—what are the words? It's fabricated in their minds. I think, that's how— that's my own personal because I was raised that way. You know, we didn't look at people as far as color and who— my my father came with nothing at 16 years old and made something of himself. So, in America, the opportunities are here and that my father is one who proves that.

Toby Baylon 19:18

Yeah

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 19:18

You have the drive? You can do it.

Toby Baylon 19:23

Yeah, and it's definitely a great and really inspirational message and going off of that I was wanting to ask you what the comparisons are like between living in Watsonville and living in Hawai'i? Like in terms of the communities that you're around where you're living.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 19:30

Um, the communities are probably pretty similar and that's what brought me here. When I came here when— in the 70s I was probably—when I was younger, the, you know, I was a minority and so, I came—I was always noticed, I mean, I'm gonna go into some little personal here, that, you know, when I went in somewhere people asked me what ethnic background I was because they didn't see many of that back in the 70s and 80s, there in in Santa Cruz and Watsonville as I was growing up. When I came here, I was a dime a dozen because everybody, you know, was—had some kind of ethnic background and it was great. I felt at home here on Maui, I'm on Maui and so I felt at home, and I brought my dad here before he passed away, I brought him out, I worked for the airlines and I would bring him out at least two, three times a year. And he loved it here because there was the fishing and and everything that he loved as in— [inaudible] he enjoyed [inaudible] a few years with him.

Toby Baylon 21:18

Yeah, that sounds really beautiful. And yeah, I— going back to your dad, I wanted to ask what kind of music he and his band would play?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 21:32

My dad had a variety of music, big band music. He played anything and everything from jazz to I don't know, there—this beat is always in my head that Filipino music, you know, that goes a bump, a bump, a bump a bump, all the way through the song. And it just— I would go with him, and I don't know, if you— if you're old enough, you look very young, or you remember the social box? Do you remember—have you heard it?

Toby Baylon 22:08

No, I don't know what that is.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 22:10

Okay. My dad would play the dances and they would have what they call a social box and they had—I don't even know how they chose the girls, but they were all young girls, and they had a bo—like a present in their hand and they'd hold it up and they would play the music and the Filipinos would dance with the with the girl or the woman and, you know, pay to the social box. And at the end, you know, the money went to the young lady. I know that I was a little shy and my dad insisted I try to do so—[inaudible] They [inaudible] with me. So, it was how many dances you got, and it was called a social box, and in—the Filipinos paid to put— to dance with the young woman. And maybe there was seven, seven at the time, you know, each time. And I did it a couple of times to make my dad happy because I—here I am in the 70s and the last thing I want to do is go dance, you know, and and holding the social box up but there—it was fun. And I seen— I never seen so many happy people, you know, the Filipinos are just very happy people in an environment like that in a positive environment. All innocent and fun, and and very respectful. You know, they were very respectful to me being a young teenager in high school and dancing with them, and these these men will probably 30 years my senior, you know, but they had fun. They wanted to dance and just have fun. So yeah, but he played even up to the date of music. I remember his sheet of music. I laughed one time because he wrote out, "I Left my Hat in San Francisco," but the music that he was playing—the name of it is "I Left my Heart in San Francisco," but we teased him. You know, Dad, you left your hat in San Francisco and I think that, you know, that was a very popular song and he played all kinds of music. So, as kids I myself never played an instrument but I had one brother that played the drums, one brother that played the trumpet, my sister played piano, and when they would ask me, what did I play? I said the stereo because I had no—I was not musically inclined at all. And my mother's sang, ya know, so came from a very—what I take with me today is I can name— if I played name that tune on TV, I bet you I could do it because of all my father's background of music. I grew up with that from all the way back to big band music. Yeah.

Toby Baylon 25:10

Yeah, even though you couldn't play, like you still experienced it, which—

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 25:15

Experienced it and I have a great appreciation for music, you know, from way back and all all kinds of music, I'm not just one of them. I can go from country to, you know, jazz and big band and rock and roll, and I I have a big, wide variety and I I give that to my dad, by putting that that—by putting music into our lives. And around Christmas and holidays, he played piano and we all got around and sing around the piano. And, yeah, I came from a very musical family.

Toby Baylon 25:57

Were you able to save or record any of his music?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 26:04

No, I only have his sheet music and I on— and I do have pictures of him in his band. That's that's about it, but never, you know— you don't think about that when you're a young girl and your father is going to play in the dances, you know, you just— back then recorders were unheard of in my day, unless you were—I don't even remember. I mean, you know, right now we can record on our phones, and we can, you know—or little recorders, but back in those days, early 60s and 70s, it it wasn't something that you carried around and thought of—or video, you know.

Toby Baylon 26:48

Right. Right. And going off of that I wanted to ask you what sort of advancements in— whether it be technology or social— that really grabbed your eye as you were growing up through the decades in Watsonville?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 27:08

Could you repeat that again? What were the advancements of—

Toby Baylon 27:12

Yeah, like what just like what changes in society and in your communities did you notice as you were living in Watsonville, throughout the decades?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 27:25

Well, throughout the decades and throughout high school, and you know, grammar school, I remember, I was always with my dad and his truck. We were— I was daddy's girl and I followed him to make deliveries, followed him to town. He did a lot of the grocery shopping and it was a very humble, quiet town. What I do remember when I was graduating from high school in 1969, the Hispanic community was taking over. Everything became— the movie theaters and everything that— I don't know, just overnight, it seemed like the Hispanic community was taking over Watsonville and it has taken over Watsonville, and I mean, it's it's changed. That's when I saw that Watsonville changed. I moved—I graduated in 69 and by 77, I had moved and, um—I go back all the time, you know, I have a house there in Santa Cruz and my family is still there. So, I go back all the time, but the town, Watsonville, is not what it used to be when I was growing up and I I have— my mother was Mexican, so I'm not saying—but I think a lot of the transients coming in, there became more drugs, more gangs, and that's what I saw in the change later in my life with Watsonville, which I didn't experience any of that in—growing up in high school. Thursday nights was to cruise up and down Watsonville, you know, in your cars, and we all met at the cannon there and—Thursday nights until the store close, and as kids had to go home, and it was all fun. Was just, Thursday night we all met each other. So yeah, it was a great town growing up in and I'm not saying it's not a great town now but I think, I don't know how it is now, but I did see the change in in probably in the 70s and 80s with with the Hispanic community growing more violent—violent gangs, and and drive by shootings, and none of that was when I was growing up.

Toby Baylon 30:18

Oh, wow, I see. Yeah, I didn't— I really didn't know much about any of that.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 30:24

mmh hm.

Toby Baylon 30:26

Yeah, um thinking on that, like, as the community in Watsonville became more Hispanicly dominated, did that create any uneasy feelings within the Filipino community that you know?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 30:45

Not that I know of. Not not— you know, I think I think the Hispanic families that moved in, they were coming in, what I saw, they were coming in to make a living just like the Filipinos did, better their lives. What was going on was the next generation, their children, that was causing all of this havoc between Santa Cruz because I have grandchildren that were going to school at that time and dealing with what were the the Nortenos and the Surrenos, and I'm like, what the heck is all that and they were gangs that were coming in from—and I— what I could see is that the parents were out there hard—working hard to make a living in in America for their family, and couldn't control these kids with and that's where the drugs came in. You know, they were pushing drugs, and I know, one of my grandson's—two of my grandson's friends were murdered by drive by shootings, and young kids, all young, Hispanic kids. So I I don't see there was any animosity between the two cultures, it's that everybody pretty much knew their place, and let the law take care of things. It's what I understand it has gotten better, but it wasn't, like I said, all that happened after I graduated and left, and in that generation, my grand—my my grandsons have all, you know, been through the gang thing, and I had one grandson even move here with me to get away from it over there, it was so bad. So, that was—and now he's a graduate from, you know, Monterey State—came here. I became a football mom as a grandmother and he came here and graduated, went back, and by that time, things have had cooled down, and he graduated from the University of Monterey and he's doing very well for himself, but had he stayed there, I don't think he would have. And his mom and dad both say that to me, thank you because had he stayed there, It was—it was becoming a war between the local kids of Watsonville and Santa Cruz, and the Hispanic community that was coming in from Mexico. So, that's the only change that I saw in [unknown].

Toby Baylon 33:35

Okay, I see and, yeah, that that's a really heavy and stressful experience to go through, I'm sure. Like, not just from the perspective of being in a racial group, but just being a grandma and wanting to make sure your grandchildren are okay.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 33:55

Well, especially myself growing up in that town between Watsonville and Santa Cruz and never had, I mean, we could play on our bikes until late at night and never had to worry about a drive by shooting, you know, or anything like that. And yeah, and I worried about my grandson at that point and offered to take him because schools here, I mean, we're just like Watsonville. You know, they—all different cultures and and and no violent—no gangs. You know, I'm I'm sure there's kids, troubled kids, but it wasn't a big major problem. So, he graduated and went on and went to junior Cabrillo College, did that

and then went to Monterey State and graduated. So, in horticulture, he wants to be a designer for the fields there in Watsonville.

Toby Baylon 34:59

Oh, cool. Going back to your experiences in high school, what was like, your like social experiences like? Like, do you have any memorable experiences you had like with your friends growing up and like throughout high school?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 35:23

Oh yeah, everyday was a memorable experience. I loved going to school I had great friends. I grew up in the country is as Hall— I don't know if you're familiar with the Hall District, Elkhorn District, that's in the country of Watsonville. So, going into Watsonville High, look here comes a country bumpkin. I didn't even know how to open up my locker—what a locker was because the kids grew up in town, they had PE and they had lockers, but us country kids—and I still am in touch with all the kids I grew up with, out from the country, and everybody helped us, everybody was there. It—I never had any problems, and I met a lot of great kids that today are still my friends. We reunited on Facebook, and we get together maybe every five years. And then the kids I grew up from kindergarten to eighth grade and through high school, we still get together. And but everyday was a memorable—the the big thing was going to the hotdog stand for lunch and getting a hot dog, a coke, and chips for 25 cents at Taylor's hot dogs. And yeah, that my brother was on the football team. I uh— so went to games and just had a great experience growing up there in 60s. Course he graduated in 66, and left to Vietnam, and that was hard on me still being in school and knowing my brother was gone and in a war, but that's what they did back then. There— It was the draft and all the kids from school that year were all drafted, all the boys, and off to Vietnam War. So, the rest of my school years, he was— I was— he graduated in 66 and I was a freshman, so, the next three years were hard on me while he was gone. He was my—he was my good friend in school.

Toby Baylon 37:46

Hmm. Yeah, what was his experience in service service like, and were you able to contact him regularly?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 37:56

Oh, yeah. He was in the Marines and he was he was gone—he reenlisted for I think two or three times. He was in Vietnam. He was in Okinawa. I still have the dolls that he sent me, the Okinawan dolls. Yeah, he he pretty much—he fought in the Vietnam War. They were front row, Marines on the ground. And yes, he did come back with some p— what'd he called PS— PTSD or, you know, and got some help, and you know, he was married and had three boys. He was even—his last part of his his military career was— he was in Honolulu, here and he had two boys, born and raised here in Honolulu, who are Hawai'i boys. So yeah, Hawai'i born, but yes, we were able to keep in contact with him. Not all the time because he moved a lot as far as if he was in Okinawa or Vietnam. They moved them a lot at that point and they were all just young young boys. It's sad. When I look back and look at their faces and look at his pictures, they look like babies. And yeah, but they served their country and then to come back from the war—It wasn't their choice to go and that's what broke our hearts. It was a draft, but coming back,

they were not acknowledged. Actually, they were spit on. They, you know, they were called baby killers. Yeah, they were looked down upon, the veterans of the Vietnam War.

Toby Baylon 39:59

How did you, you and your family kind of respond to that?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 40:05

Well, in in a small town, Watsonville, when he came home the town was happy he came home. The news even did a um an article on him, I remember that. They came and did an article on him returning back from Vietnam. It was others, and maybe because he had his family, and he was established there in Watsonville, but others that weren't— couldn't get jobs, they couldn't get unemployment, they were just treated very badly. And a lot of them became homeless, and alcoholics, and drug addicts because of the fact that what they had to deal with as young boys, and then coming home and being treated like scum because they had no choice, the government sent them there to Vietnam, and people held that against them. So so, as far as my brother, he came home to the family who was there for him, and and like I said, growing up in that community and my dad was well known, everybody treated my brother kindly.

Toby Baylon 41:32

That's good, at least because yeah, that's really unfortunate to be, not just put in that situation, but to not be welcomed home.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 41:44

Right, right and you know, when I talk to some of the vets now—and they're trying to acknowledge them a little more—and they say, being in high school, your senior year should be the best year of your life, and all of them were in their senior year, dreading each day that went by because once they graduated, they belong to Uncle Sam, and they had no choice. So, they didn't really have that happiness of graduating from high school, you know, they—a lot of them were ready to go, a lot of them may have been forced to go. My brother was one was ready to go, you know, he was ready to go. It was a—my my parents always took pride in serving your country because my older brother served in the Navy, Ben Jr. He served in the Navy, he was on the USS Ranger and then my brother went into the Marines when the Vietnam War broke out, but my other brother had come out before, I mean, before the Vietnam War started. So, they took pride in in seeing my brothers serve their country, so therefore, my brothers took pride in serving their country. And um and uh yeah, so that that was one thing, you know, my father was a very proudful American. He came here to America to make a better life for himself, and later meeting my mother, and having his kids and having a family. The opportunities were there for him and he always taught us kids, opportunity knocks, is out there, so, go get it and he he instilled that in us and the being a proud American, proud citizen. And, you know, he—him and my uncles all got their citizenship, and very, very proud, you know, to be American. That's why it hurts when I see a lot of people not proud of America right now and feel that there's no opportunity for certain race, creeds, or colors, which is not true, and the only reason why I stand by that, again, is because my father was the picture of that.

Toby Baylon 44:27

Right. Right.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 44:28

Never complained and never complained how he was treated. He just rose above it, and moved on, and made the most out of his life.

Toby Baylon 44:42

Yeah, that's definitely a common theme that I've experienced in my personal life. Like, I'm Filipino and one of my dad's favorite phrases is no complaints because it's just like, go through it, you know, you have to, you know? And yeah, speaking with other people that are Filipino, like, they say sort of similar things and it—I guess it does sort of sort of like tie into the whole theme of resiliency.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 45:21

Right. Right.

Toby Baylon 45:24

Yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 45:25

And and today, you know, I see what's going on and I try not to watch the news, and I try, but I just just a couple of things that I have picked up since COVID hit and the changing in presidents and the whole, you know, we were locked down to have to listen and watch TV, and we had no choice, and what I gather out of that was everybody has the opportunities in America. And you can say, well, my ancestors in 1700 were treated badly. Well, my father was treated badly but that doesn't make me a racist today. You know, my father was treated badly by the Caucasian, I'm married to a Caucasian. There was like—there was no color when I was growing up, there was no—we didn't look at each other as far as religion or color, you know, um and so what I see going on today, I think, I'm very Christian and I think it's word to the end. Everybody is just fighting everybody, you know, they're beating up on the Asians and the Blacks are feeling that they need this, and they need that and and I love them all. I have the best Black friends and I have the best, you know, I'm half Asian and Caucasian—I don't I don't see it, what's going on right now, though, you know. And I don't want to get political, but I don't see pushing this narrative of racism, and making this country fall apart because it's— the opportunities there. I'm just gonna keep saying the opportunity is there for everyone, for everyone. My dad didn't have an education came here at 16, but he made the most of his life and became a businessman. You know, he owned quite a bit of land and homes there and, you know, with berries, and, you know, he—and music, and he just loved life. So, it's really up to the individuals, you're going to sit down and feel sorry for yourself, you're not going to get anywhere. So, that's that's one thing I love my parents for is instilling that in us kids, and coming from Watsonville I'm proud of my heritage, and I'm proud of Watsonville, regardless of what it's turned in and out to be, Watsonville is my hometown.

Toby Baylon 48:20

That's really lovely and yeah, an amazing, just life lesson for everyone to learn, you know.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 48:27

Right. Right.

Toby Baylon 48:29

Yeah and kind of taking a step back a little bit to your experiences in high school. You were you were saying that, like growing up, you didn't really hear much about the sort of racial conflicts or just racism in general, in terms of the circle of your family, but as you kind of grew older and went into the city more and like in high school, how did other people outside of your family discuss this, like your teachers?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 49:09

You know, my teachers did not discuss racism, or anything that they're being taught in school today. That's why I'm saying if it was science, we had fun. If it was math, I wasn't that great at math, but we had fun. If it was English, I loved English and we have fun. PE was fun and I don't ever remember the teachers treating anybody racial. I don't ever remember the teachers talking racism. I don't ever remember the teachers at that point in high school and in grammar school—that's why I'm saying I don't know if I lived a very sheltered life because it's hard for me to accept what's going on right now. Especially the teaching community, the teachers that are teaching a lot of stuff in school that shouldn't be taught in school, you know, that should be taught by the parents, not by them. They should stick to math, English, social studies, you know, spelling, arithmetic, and stop trying to teach genders and things like that nowadays I don't think that's right, you know, um, but yeah, no. I—as far as the teachers, I had great teachers, and and I don't ever remember anybody, or hearing of anybody—oh this this students being picked on because he's Asian, and the teacher doesn't like him, nothing like that, not ever. I can speak—

Toby Baylon 51:01

Okay. Um, so how how did you—or like, when did you first hear about the specific Watsonville riots, like in the 30s? Do you hear that from your family? Or did you hear this through like—

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 51:18

I heard it from families. No, not an education. Heard it from like I said, I was very sheltered. At 13 I was daddy's girl, and and very—you know, I went to school, and came home, and followed him around, went fishing with him, to the derbies and stuff. And there was just times that my mom and I would sit down while my dad was out either playing in a band or—and we would begin to talk and, you know, I would ask questions, and then that's when she told me about the—what had happened in the 20s and 30s to to the Filipino men [unintelligible] men that came, and that my dad did experience that, but wasn't—I think he was in the right place at the right time and didn't, you know, didn't—he was never beat up, or shot at, or stabbed, or anything, or had to be in any fights or anything. I think he knew where he needed to be at the right time of the day or evening. Um, but it existed, and she—that she was the one that told me about the riots, and and the killings, and the stabbings of the Filipinos, and telling them to go home, and if not, they're gonna burn the town down, and all this stuff and I—you know, I listened, and she didn't dwell on it, and neither did I. And, and then now, today, you know, I love the fact that Roy, and you, and everybody's pulling together to go back in history and learn and know what they—everything that happened, and that's just a little piece that I know, and wanted to share, when that came, again, from my mother. Oops.

Toby Baylon 53:22

Okay, gotcha. Yeah and, yeah, in terms of the whole project, it—the riots itself, it is just this—a small bit of it too because, yeah, we just want to know more about the generations that came after and like the existing family members, and so now I want to focus it more on you. Well, how— what is like, how did you kind of set up your own family dynamic as you've grown up and moved to Hawai'i?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 53:57

Well, I moved to Hawai'i, and I was married and I went through a divorce. Um, and I had two children, and when my daughter was 13, I came here to Hawai'i. Just California, to me, wasn't the same anymore, and I decided, okay, do I want to move to Southern California or Hawai'i because I love the hot weather and I came to Hawai'i and fell in—I first landed in Honolulu and didn't like it. It was San Francisco on the beach and I go, I might as well have stayed home. What I was thinking of Hawai'i was huts, and quiet, and so on, and then I discovered Maui, and that's what brought me to Maui. I lived here with my daughter and my son and I met a lot of great people. Excuse me. My dad had some family here from the Philippines, cousins. So, I got to meet them, and know them, and and felt very comfortable right away. And then maybe five years later, I meet my husband, but I had a great time here being single and raising my kids. It was—it was quiet and it was safe. I worked for the airlines, as I told you, I thought to myself, what can I do to be able to get home to Watsonville, to California, to see my family, without having to pay big prices? And so I got [inaudible]

Toby Baylon 55:57

I—oh, you cut out a little bit.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 56:02

[inaudible] are you here?

Toby Baylon 56:04

Oh, yeah. Okay, I can hear you. Um, the last thing I heard was you wanted a way to go back to Watsonville, more—

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 56:14

Right.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 56:15

So, that's where my life took me. I live on a beautiful, two acres, two and a half acres. I love animals. I have two pet goats, seven dogs, 35 cats. There I trap, neuter, and release the cats, so they don't make babies. And every feral chicken on Hawai'i finds out that I feed them so, I have maybe about 100 chickens on the property roaming around. They're not my chickens, they just come to eat. They just come to me. So, I have a really lax life today. My dad was able to experience my life here, but where I'm at right now, they always say you can take the girl out of the out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl. So, I live on two and a half acres in the country. Reminds me of my home there in Watsonville

Toby Baylon 56:15

Yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 56:16

See family with— without buying big tickets for three, three of us. So, I got a job with the airlines and I started out in the baggage area. I— and my boss came to me and says no, you're— you don't need to be throwing bags, you you you know, you have leadership skills. So, she put me up to be an agent, and then I went from an agent to elite agent, and then I went from supervisor on to customer service manager for seven airlines. I was a contract service manager, started with nine employees, and by the time I retired I had 327 mechanics— airline mechanics, baggage— I was in charge of the baggage agents, the ticketing agents, and when I say contract service, I I uh—we were Aloha airline employees, but I was contracted out to Delta, American Trans Air, [unknown]. I had Canada 3000, I had three—and I would have to put my hat on and change and go to the— like Canada and learn their ways and come back and train all the employees the way Canada wanted it. And so yes, I I think that was instilled in my dad, you can do it, you can keep going.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 57:48

And the only—the only time I ever felt a little bit prejudiced here was when I got into management, and I'll tell you this funny story. There was one Japanese man that was a manager and I was hired by another local man that had gone to San Jose State. So, he he hired me on the spot coming from California. Well, they didn't get along, those two managers. So, it had nothing really to do with me. It only had to do with whoever that manager that hired me, he didn't like. So, the employees that he hired, he kind of looked down upon. So, one day, I become manager, and I'm sitting in a manager meeting with them, and this this manager says to everybody, well, I know all my employees understand, because we all graduated from Kamehameha School. You know, that's the big top— Punahou and Kamehameha Schools over here. Does anybody else understand you and I go, well, I think I understand. I didn't graduate from Kamehameha. I graduated from Watsonville high, a little farming community town and I'm doing the same job you're doing. That quieted him up real quick, you know. I mean, he was trying to talk that he was some big guy and his employees because he graduated—and he used that, I graduated from Kamehameha schools, and I said, well, I graduated from Watsonville High School, and I'm doing the same job you're doing. And later in life, I became his boss. I became his [inaudible] retired and my husband owns a construction company here. I became his safety director, and I did safety, did training, forklift trainings, gasoline training, just all kinds of custom training for the job sites. I went—flew in to different parts of the state and got some training, OSHA training, and moved up on that, and then other companies hired me, so, I ended up going into business for myself. A small—I was called Hawai'i safety net. That started out just helping my husband because I said, I don't really want to work anymore with people, and he says, Come on, you'll be good. You'll be okay and I wasn't—he knew I was not afraid to jump in and learn. I, you know, and that was one thing my dad did without an education, and I saw him—he always told us kids, we could do it, no matter what we could do it. So, I was successful at the airlines, and then I came into business with him, and people would approach him and saying, do you think your wife would want to do our safety for our company. And so I ended up establishing my own little Hawai'i safety net consulting company, and I worked for other construction companies around the state. I flew around Honolulu, Big Island, Kauai, and did the jobs that were going up. I did that for eight years and then I was flying back—I had to give it up because my sister was very ill there in Watsonville. So, I was flying back and forth to take care of her. By this time,

I'm established enough to buy my own ticket. So, I was flying home back and forth to see my sister and take care of her and she passed away in 2018. So yeah, but um, yeah.

Toby Baylon 1:03:01

That's lovely. Um, I'm very happy that you've come all this way, and to like end back in a community and place that is like, just as rewarding.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:03:12

Yes, yes. And like I say we we have a couple of homes there in Santa Cruz, not because we have a whole lot of money, but they were left to my husband as far as his family members that—his mother and father who passed, and so I go home there quite a bit. You know, we've have remodeled the homes and made it—one into a vacation home and one in to a a—we rent it out. And the money we get from the rent we put into any type of fixing of the homes, if they need it. Right off of Portola and 41st there in Santa Cruz. It's in a beautiful area and that's where he—that was his home that—growing up and right off of 41st Avenue. He was a surfer there in the East Side of Santa Cruz, and we met here in Hawai'i, never dreaming we were two towns away.

Toby Baylon 1:04:10

Wow.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:04:11

Going home before, you know, our our family started passing away, you know, it was nice to be able to go there and see everybody, you know, our families together. [inaudible] many nieces, and nephews, and grandson from, anywhere from Watsonville, all the way up towards San Francisco, so, I still am in that area quite a bit when I'm in town. That will always be home.

Toby Baylon 1:04:43

For sure. Okay, I got it. Um, did your—did your mom ever end up visiting you there in Hawai'i?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:04:51

My mother passed away before I moved to Hawai'i. I was only 26 years old when she passed away. She had diabetes and she died at 43. So, shoot 53, I'm sorry, she died at 53. So, no, she didn't get to experience this, but when my brother was stationed in Honolulu, she was able to go see my brother in Honolulu, when he was in the military, in the Marines.

Toby Baylon 1:05:24

Okay, okay. I, see. I just wanted to ask, like, what are your kids doing now?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:05:34

My daughter is an RN, emergency room RN, here at Maui Maui Memorial Hospital. She—I helped her get through school. She has two kids, three kids, and a grandson. And, yeah, she's an ER nurse here in Maui Memorial. My son works through the city there in Santa Cruz. He's been there many years with the city, and that's the—that's the boy, his son that came here to live with me when he was having

problems in high school, and his dad and him live in Santa Cruz. And my son works for the city of Santa Cruz.

Toby Baylon 1:06:22

Okay, gotcha. Yeah, it sounds like, yeah, NorCal is kind of like, a sort of home for both your family and also your husband's family.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:06:33

Yes, yes, it is. But yes, and then my son's there, and so when I go back, it's like being home, and seeing everybody, and getting together, and barbecue, and go fishing. We— my brother and I like to remember my dad, and so we'll go out start fishing out there, and then reach the beach, or we'll go to the wharf and do a little fishing. So yeah, we try to keep the tradition going by just memories.

Toby Baylon 1:07:06

Gotcha and, you know, as we wrap up here, do you have any special memories that you hold close to your heart that you experienced with your dad?

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:07:19

Oh, I have many special memories. Um, one one that stands out in my mind is, like I said, he was older when he had me. By the by the time I was in grammar school, my brother was in the Navy. My other brother was four years older than me so he was still in school around the time I was in school. But the memories I do have with my dad was going fishing with him on Manresa beach. He would make peanut butter jelly sandwiches, and we'd take a little picnic lunch, and he would also dig for cockle clams. So, we came home with buckets of clams, and he served fish, caught a lot of perch off the shoreline, but the memory that I have on one day was I was out there with him. We had the whole Manresa beach to ourselves and I spotted a little sea lion. And the little sea lion came up, and he was busy fishing, and I was playing, and I was playing with the little sea lion. The little sea lion was playing with me. I didn't get close to it, but it was following me, and then it was like the mother called the baby sea lion, and the baby went running back into the water, and of course now I realize how dangerous that could be. But the baby went running back into the water, and my dad was so surprised the baby laid on its back, and was like waving its little fin, like waving goodbye. And that's one memory that I have, that he witnessed with me as a little girl, that nobody else witnessed. And that was this little sea lion waving goodbye to me and he was going with his mom, and I was with my dad.

Toby Baylon 1:09:21

Oh thats really cute.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:09:23

Yeah and I had many memories. The shark Derby with him. He always entered the Moss Landing shark derby, and two two years in a row he won, and he held a title for many years of 165 foot pound manta ray. And that year, he won big, and I won the smallest fish. So, he won the biggest fish I won the smallest fish and I had a little bowl head so I got a little gift you know too. But yeah, there was many memories that my dad—my dad and I were very close, and I was very close with my mother also, but she left so early that it was just my dad, it was, you know—he he did remarry and he went back to the

Philippines and and did remarry. And she was a—she was a good woman, and I had no complaints, he needed a companion. But yeah, I had many, many memories with him growing up, good memories.

Toby Baylon 1:10:39

Yeah, I don't mean to limit you to just one or a few you can feel free to say any memories that, you know, you hold really close to your heart.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:10:50

And I always surprised my dad. And I—he always, I guess, you know, he—I was spoiled and there wasn't anything I couldn't do wrong. You know, the boys were disciplined. My older sister, she was married and out, you know, before I was even in kindergarten. So, there is one thing, after after my divorce, you know, I kind of became liberated, and I had my hair spiked, and I had, you know, I had a whole new look, and I remember my dad asking me to come to one of his dances. And I said, Okay. And so that afternoon, I decided to not shave my head, but cut it short on one side, and it was kind of like, I don't know, if you know, the band Heart? The girls on—

Toby Baylon 1:11:48

Oh, yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:11:49

Okay, my hair was wild like that and I had a pair leopard pants on. I was single and I did go, but I remember him and he was he was so proud of me all the time and I just remember his face when I walked in. He was playing the piano. He was up on stage with his band, he's playing his piano and I walk in looking like this. Okay, now you have all these older Filipinos, and and and and women, and I walk in and he double takes on me, and he looks at me and realizes it's me, and then just shakes his head. And I just laughed. I just laughed. I went up when I got on the stage and I sat next to him. And I asked—he's playing piano and he's looking at me like this, just shaking his head. Well, that whole night, all these little Filipinos wanted to dance. You know, I I looked like something out of Guns and Roses at that point, you know, and—but it was fun. I—he said, I never ceased to amaze me. He always told me to be who I wanted to be, and you know, as long as I had respect and love for people, and so, yeah. He—and he always accepted me for who I was, so.

Toby Baylon 1:11:49

Yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:12:02

So that was—that was later in life, but as a as a little girl growing up, I do remember when I told you he had ranch hands. This long table, I must have been maybe four years old, not even in school yet, and he must have 15 ranch hands or more. And my uncle and two other cooks cooked, and they always sat me in the middle of the table. And they would pill the shrimp for me, and you know, I had my bowl of rice and my shrimp and all his ranch hands would hand me a shrimp and hand me a piece of fish and and I just—I do remember that and that —I must have been only four years old because I wasn't in kindergarten yet, I was there. But I look forward to that and all these wonderful Filipino men that were my uncle's, as everybody's your uncle, took care of me, you know, and and of course my—his actual

brother, my uncle Andy, was like our second father. He never married and that was my dad's brother, who came from the Philippines at 18 and I was always with him too. He took me to the circus and so there was a lot of good memories with my dad and my uncle and my mom. You know, she was homebody she worked, but she she was a nurse and but she was worked and homebody and made sure our clothes clothes were ironed and did everything. And so my fun time, I do remember more so with my dad and my uncle because they were self employed, you know.

Toby Baylon 1:15:05

Right. Right, and was this the uncle that was originally sick—

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:15:11

Yeah

Toby Baylon 1:15:11

when you immigrated? Okay.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:15:14

Yes, he was supposed to come, but he was sick, so um the— they sent my dad and he came a few months later with the cousins and, yeah. So, he came, and there are some other memories that I do remember, as I was growing up. All these uncles used to come. They all remained in the city, they all became city—what we called City Slickers and we were out in the country. And they would come with, you know, they still remained in the restaurant business, even owned a business called the Black Sheep in San Francisco. And they would bring lobster and all kinds of prawns. In return, my dad had berries, apples, he had a huge, you know, zucchini and all that. And we'd all do this exchange, you know, they would bring that and have a big barbecue, and they take home apples, and berries, and blackberries, and raspberries and because my dad had all that land and had that, so he'd have them ready in crates to take home. And what my brothers and I do remember was sitting there, after they would eat, and of course, a couple of shots of whiskey then they're sitting out there laughing and talking about their time as, as a teenager when they came, and my uncle, he was the littlest out of all of them, but he took care of all of them like the father. And they said that that one one memory, I remember them laughing in the in the garage, that they would get home from work and come in and all— and my uncle would be sleeping because he was responsible. And they'd been out working and partying and come home and start playing their, they called the phonograph, you know, they'd start playing the phonograph loud. And they said, my uncle kept telling them to stop it and stop it, and they were having, you know, there's five, five of them, and four of them are out there, having fun. Here comes my uncle picked up the phonograph threw it across the room, and they all were laughing, how they there, they were afraid of him, you know, and he was a little less out of all of them. But he told him over and over, stop, stop, I gotta go to work in the morning. And they wouldn't. So they said, he came in the living room, picked up the phonograph and threw it across the room. And they're laughing here they are in their 70s, you know, older men laughing on what they did as teenagers, and everything was all in fun when they came. You know, that's what my brother and I said, they came here to work. And they came here as teenagers. And I'm not saying that they didn't go out and dancing and meet girls and things like that, but they didn't come to this country to cause problems, you know, bringing drugs or fighting and forming gangs and stuff like that. They—my father and his cousins were never arrested, never been in jail,

never saw the inside as a police station, except if they had to go there and report something. And that's what my brother and I were talking about today is that everything was all in fun. Even though the life they lived—they still made the most of their life, and in a positive way, and not caused any harm or trouble to anybody. So, yeah.

Toby Baylon 1:18:53

Right. It sounds like they came for, yeah, professional reasons just to get a career and also they were just themselves.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:19:01

Yeah and they were teenagers, you know. Coming—you know, if you think back, they were 16,17, 18—probably up to 21. And, um, so yeah, they were young boys, and probably interested in girls, and so they worked hard, sent their money home, but when they played, they played hard, and it was all in fun. And like I said, the memory that I was getting at was sitting in at—me being probably 15, 16 years old, sitting there with my brothers just roaring laughing about what they did when they were teenagers. And of course, my dad's over there, like, okay, you know, enough. You know, he does, you know, your father's trying to—you know, he doesn't want you to know the things that he did, and so my uncles would sit there laughing and after a while my dad was like, okay enough of the stories. Cause he— because he had a young, young daughter, and that was one thing my dad was very strict, you know. And yes, my dad was was very, very strict. I was to go to school come home, in high school. I wasn't to have boyfriends. They could call on the phone, but I couldn't date or anything like that, and that was just the Filipino way. At the time, I was upset, but it, you know, I realized now that was his culture. And I remember telling my mom, how come I can't do this, and how come I can't do that. And then she told me one day, she says, you know, your dad knows, this is— how she put it to me. Your dad knows what boys do to girls, and and your dad was a player. Your dad had many girlfriends. And I go, what's that got to do with me? You know, and he goes, well, he just wants to keep you safe. You know, that was his way of keeping me safe. So apparently, my mother explained to me when she met him and got together with him. Like I told you, the Caucasian woman was—really loved the Filipino men, and when he went to break things off because he met my mom, and he was marrying her, my mom says they wouldn't give up. They just wouldn't give up. They'd come knocking on the door. They they went throwing rocks at his window, and stuff, you know, even when they were married. And so and—my mom my mom laughed, you know, she was just telling me that your dad had some beautiful—the way my mom discovered—described it was he had beautiful girlfriends, Caucasian girlfriends. And she goes, and then here I come Hispanic, I think I was the homeliest of them all. And one day, I was telling my dad before he passed away that my mom said that and he said, oh, no, she was the most beautiful of them all, you know.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:22:13

And he died of cancer. In the last four months of his life I brought him here to Hawai'i to live with me and take care of him, and so that's how I got to know about the World War—why he had to—how he left San uh, San Francisco and San Jose met my mom and went to Watsonville. Had—in 1991 is how I found that out, and that came directly from him because he he came, and we'd sit for hours and talk. And that's when he told me Oh, no, your mom was—and I told him, you know, Mom told me that once and he's Oh, no, she was the most beautiful of them all, you know. So, you know, we're all always our

worst critic, and she thought she wasn't as pretty as all the rest, but he said she was, you know. And yes, he he stayed with me for four months, and then he wasn't feeling well. He was getting nosebleeds and I took him to the hospital, the doctor here. And he told me he had to put him in the hospital, that he didn't think he was going to make it. So, the doctor was pretty frank, and told my dad that, and my dad said I want to go home and die.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:23:38

Back then the the airlines didn't really check with, you know, somebody because right now if you're sick, you can't get it on an airline because if they have to divert the plane, you're, you know, other p— passengers are suffering about that. So, I took —he goes, I want to leave, and the doctor says you can't travel Mr. Tumbaga, and he goes, I want to go home. So he said, okay, sign here. I'm not responsible if anything happens to you. I took my dad in his bathrobe and IVs and his arms, and we flew home on United. I still remember that day. I called my brother and said meet me in San Francisco. We got to take him straight to Dominican Hospital. That's what the doctor had requested. And I just remember him looking out the window and saying, this is the last time I'm going to see Hawai'i because, you know, he used to fly back and forth to see me and he had—he was laying his head on the window, and of course you see the beautiful mountains and ocean. I do remember him saying this will last— be the last time I see Hawai'i. So, every time I fly out, and fly in that memory is embedded me on what I'm looking at, you know that he— those were the last things he saw before he was went back. My brother met us, we went to straight to Dominican Hospital, and two days later he had expired. So, but he, he got to go home, he wanted to keep— he wanted to go home and die in California. You know, he didn't want to die here. So, and that was his life story he was 86. 86, yeah, so he had he had a good life. And, um, regardless of what had happened at the beginning of his life here in America, like I say, he rose above it, and never went back feeling sorry for himself or feeling sorry what had happened. Never laid on us don't trust this color, race or creed. He just—we never knew anything until we got older. And then everything that's coming out now it with, with, you know, the the—what you're trying to do and Roy, that's exactly the stuff that I was told, you know, so it's all the truth, you know.

Toby Baylon 1:26:20

Right.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:26:21

So—

Toby Baylon 1:26:22

And it's definitely the truth that your dad really rose above all of that, and really made his way up. That's what I find so amazing about hearing his story because it's so different from kind of other stories that I've been hearing in regards to that time in Watsonville.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:26:43

Mmhmm.

Toby Baylon 1:26:43

Because, yeah, he was he was working in really upscale hotels, and he had a music career, and yeah, I just find that so inspiring.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:26:56

Yes, yes and that, you know, I have given to Roy the pictures of his band, and, you know, our land and his old tractors, there's a lot of pictures that I have sent to Roy. He used a few in the calendar, the first calendar that was out, and there's a few at the museum there in Watsonville, but I have so much more. And I you know, I still even have the ledger, he had beautiful handwriting, beautiful handwriting. And then eighth grade, eighth grade education, because he was—the family was poor, and they got him on the next boat out to come and help support. Um, but he was very, very booksmart—read, wrote beautifully. And I had his ledger, and that was all his ranch hands on how he kept—who he paid, how much he paid, what job they were on, what they did that day. I still have that ledger. That was that's something that I wanted to take back. I didn't want to leave in the museum, but I want to take back and share with you know, Roy, and if we ever all can get together and have a meeting and meet each other. You know, that would be great to bring that back and show him. Yeah.

Toby Baylon 1:28:25

Yeah, of course. Yeah. I'm sure Roy is very willing to organize.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:28:30

Oh, yeah.

Toby Baylon 1:28:31

Yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:28:32

Yeah, he has a couple of times. And I was supposed to go back at the—when they when the—what was it February of when they acknowledged Watsonville. Feb—in February, but I had the flu and I couldn't fly back, and then I was coming the year after and COVID hit. So, I've been here ever since, but I'm planning on heading over there, probably, my husband and I, probably June, first part of June, so.

Toby Baylon 1:29:12

Okay.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:29:13

You know.

Toby Baylon 1:29:15

For sure. Well, on that note, I think that's a good place for us to leave it for now, but of course, if you, you know, you have a lot of stories and memories of both of your parents. If you want to schedule another interview in the future, like feel free like, this time and this zone is like all yours. So yeah, if it's something you would be interested in, don't hesitate to contact me, but, yeah, I'm gonna take this recording down and I'll send it over to you within the week so you can—

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:29:58

Okay.

Toby Baylon 1:29:59

look it over.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:30:01

Okay, Toby, and it was sure nice meeting you, and thank you for putting all of this together. Ya know, helping out interviews and so on. Yeah.

Toby Baylon 1:30:11

Yeah, no worries. Thank you for joining me. Yeah.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:30:15

Okay. We'll talk soon then.

Toby Baylon 1:30:18

Yeah. Awesome. Take care. Have a good day.

Lydia Tumbaga Brumblay 1:30:21

Take care, Thanks. Take care, Toby. Bye